United Nations S/PV.6017

Security Council

Sixty-third year

Provisional

6017th meeting

Wednesday, 19 November 2008, 10 a.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Arias Sánchez	(Costa Rica)
Members:	Belgium	Mr. Grauls
	Burkina Faso	Mr. Kafando
	China	Mr. Zhang Yesui
	Croatia	Mr. Jurica
	France	Mr. Ripert
	Indonesia	Mr. Natalegawa
	Italy	Mr. Terzi di Sant'Agata
	Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	Mr. Ettalhi
	Panama	Mr. Lewis-Navarro
	Russian Federation	Mr. Churkin
	South Africa	Mr. Kumalo
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir John Sawers
	United States of America	Mr. Khalilzad
	Viet Nam	Mr. Le Luong Minh

Agenda

Maintenance of international peace and security

Strengthening collective security through general regulation and reduction of armaments

Letter dated 10 November 2008 from the Permanent Representative of Costa Rica to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2008/697)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-154A.

08-60919 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Maintenance of international peace and security

Strengthening collective security through general regulation and reduction of armaments

Letter dated 10 November 2008 from the Permanent Representative of Costa Rica to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2008/697)

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I should like to inform the Council that I have received letters from the representatives of Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Guatemala, Japan, Mexico, Morocco, Nigeria, Norway, Pakistan, Qatar, Spain, Switzerland and the United Republic of Tanzania, in which they request to be invited to participate in the consideration of the item on the Council's agenda.

In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite those representatives to participate in the consideration without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provision of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

On behalf of the Council, I extend a warm welcome to His Excellency Mr. Renan Fuentealba, Special Envoy of the President of Chile.

At the invitation of the President, the representatives of the aforementioned countries took the seats reserved for them at the side of the Council Chamber.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): In accordance with the understanding reached in the course of the Council's prior consultations, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation, under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure, to Mr. Sergio Duarte, High Representative for Disarmament Affairs.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

I invite Mr. Duarte to take a seat at the Council table.

In accordance with the understanding reached in the course of the Council's prior consultations, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation, under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure, to Archbishop Celestino Migliore, Apostolic Nuncio, Permanent Observer of the Holy See to the United Nations.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

I invite the Permanent Observer of the Holy See to take the seat reserved for him at the side of the Council Chamber.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to draw the Council's attention to document S/2008/697, containing a letter dated 10 November 2008 from the Permanent Representative of Costa Rica, transmitting a concept paper on the item under consideration.

Costa Rica has convened this thematic debate on strengthening collective security and arms regulation with the objective of considering what is contained in Article 26 of the Charter. That Article gives to the Security Council the express mandate of promoting the establishment and maintenance of international peace and security with the least diversion for armaments of the world's economic and human resources. We must take action to achieve this noble objective.

I believe that we have the obligation to reflect upon the role entrusted to this Council to promote international peace and security. And I believe that this is an opportune moment to consider the instruments that can be used to achieve those objectives. Among them is the strengthening of both regional and global multilateral mechanisms and, without a doubt, arms control and regulation. The dialogue that we are proposing today should not be an isolated event in the struggle to build better well-being. We must begin on a path of reflection and action which will bring us to a more rational use of available resources and, without undermining security, will ensure greater development.

This is a particularly opportune moment. On one hand, arms races are developing in many situations around the world. On the other hand, there are the crises that afflict us. The food crisis, the environmental crisis, the energy crisis and the economic crisis are impeding efforts to improve the lives of those who are condemned to poverty, ignorance and ill-health. It

would appear that the time has come for us to recognize the link that exists between the squandering of resources on arms and the need for those resources to advance us to greater levels of human development. This is what we must do after having recognized that peace and security, development and human rights are the pillars of this Organization and the basis of our collective security and wellbeing. Today we need to go beyond words. The dialogue that we are starting now must lead us to action.

At this meeting, the Security Council will hear a statement on behalf of the Secretary-General by Mr. Sergio Duarte, High Representative for Disarmament Affairs. I invite Mr. Duarte to take the floor.

Mr. Duarte: It is a pleasure to send the Secretary-General's greetings to the Security Council on the occasion of this important debate on the strengthening of collective security.

Achieving a sense of collective security is a vital step towards preventing conflict. As we know all too well, organizations tend to be better equipped for reacting to developments than for anticipating them. But we cannot be passive in the face of threats to international peace and security. That is why conflict prevention is very high on my agenda and why the international community must strengthen its ability to minimize the potential for conflict.

The strengthening of collective security can build trust between States. And it can pave the way for agreements and cooperation in other fields, steadily tying countries together in a web of shared interest, better understanding and mutual support.

The strengthening of collective security through general regulation and reduction of armaments was a central preoccupation of the League of Nations. When the United Nations was established, the issue of minimizing the diversion of the world's human and economic resources for armaments was given a place in the Charter along with disarmament.

No serious discussion on the limitation or elimination of armaments can avoid the topic of improving transparency. If States behave in a predictable and transparent way, that can build confidence and thereby promote collective security.

Member States have developed two transparency instruments within the framework of the United Nations. First is the Standardized Instrument for Reporting Military Expenditures. This will be reviewed in 2010 for the first time. Secondly is the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms, to which Member States may report their arms imports and exports, as well as data on their military holdings and production in specific categories of major conventional weapons. Over the years, Member States have agreed to steadily widen the scope of the Register. Significantly, in 2003 they decided that States could include their transfers of small arms. Far more than half of all United Nations Member States have participated in both instruments. I would hope to see even greater involvement, as well as more consistent reporting.

But let us remember that transparency in armaments is only one of several criteria that the world community is seeking to enshrine in multilateral agreements in the fields of disarmament and arms regulation. Others include irreversibility, verification and the degree to which signatories are bound by an agreement. To the extent that such criteria are accepted by States and implemented in good faith, prospects for achieving the full potential of collective security will grow.

I welcome the recognition by the Security Council that progress in disarmament and the regulation of armaments can make important contributions to strengthening international security, to the benefit of all. All Member States and their populations have a stake in security. Security is a common good and, as such, has value only when it is shared with others.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank Mr. Duarte for his statement.

In accordance with the understanding reached among Council members, I wish to remind all speakers to limit their statements to no more than five minutes in order to enable the Council to carry out its work expeditiously. Delegations with lengthy statements are kindly requested to circulate the written text and to deliver a condensed version when speaking in the Chamber.

I am pleased to welcome the presence in the Council table of the Vice-President and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Panama, His Excellency Mr. Samuel Lewis-Navarro. I invite him to take the floor.

Mr. Lewis-Navarro (Panama) (*spoke in Spanish*): First of all, I would like to congratulate the President of Costa Rica on his initiative of putting forward this important subject for discussion today. Panama, a country where people of different races, religions and cultures live together in peace and harmony, cannot but seek the strengthening of multilateral collective security mechanisms and the rule of law.

At the 2005 World Summit, our leaders adopted a multidimensional approach to security by linking security, human rights and development. That requires us to make greater multilateral efforts to achieve disarmament and the elimination of weapons of mass destruction and thereby limit military expenditure to bring capabilities in line with the legitimate needs for defence and security.

However, at the present time, the greatest challenges to international peace and security arise not from wars between States or territorial invasions, but from internal conflicts, transnational organized crime and the failure of States. For that reason, our greater concern should be the continued trade in small arms and light weapons, which feed criminality and armed conflict everywhere. The illicit trafficking of weapons is one of the main challenges to international peace and security today. Their illegal trade represents a quarter of global trade, a large part of which is directed towards conflict situations.

The Security Council has addressed that situation many times by imposing arms embargoes, which have effectively served to reduce the number of victims. However, another significant effect of that trade has been to exacerbate serious social problems. Those arms are more devastating and lethal than weapons of mass destruction. Their accumulative effect, measured in the number of dead and wounded and their social cost, are sufficiently worrying to impel us to act resolutely to put a stop to this plague, which threatens humankind.

The international community has established a number of international agreements to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction that have significantly increased international cooperation. However, with regard to small arms and weapons, all we currently have is a non-binding Programme of Action, in which little more than two thirds of Member States participate. That initiative will be insufficient until States that manufacture small arms and light weapons incorporate its provisions into a binding instrument allowing greater efficiency and effectiveness in fighting the illicit traffic in arms. For our part, in order to contribute to that goal at the local level, the Government of President Martín Torrijos has promulgated legislation to impose greater control over those activities in our country.

However, such initiatives are not enough. Given the scale of the impact of small arms and light weapons, the lack of equal efforts with respect to the production and trafficking of armaments is inexcusable. Without regulation and international monitoring, it will not be possible to reduce the global impact of the legal sale of weapons. Just as there are controls over the production and transit of nuclear materials, so we should be able to trace the production of small arms. We need to consider how to achieve compatible standards and configure global databases for the exchange of information among regulatory bodies.

We know that the Charter of the United Nations recognizes the right of Member States to legitimate self-defence, but curbing the illegal traffic in weapons or regulating their legal trade in no way affect that right. Regulations that could be established or measures that could be adopted would not interfere with the right of States to protect themselves for domestic or international crime.

Lastly, I cannot conclude, Sir, without recognizing the efforts that you have been making to ensure visibility for this issue at the national and international levels. We can only hope that they are successful.

Mr. Le Luong Minh (Viet Nam): I thank you, Sir, and the delegation of Costa Rica for taking the initiative to organize this debate of the Security Council on the issue of strengthening collective security through general regulation and reduction of armaments. I thank you for personally presiding over today's debate.

I would like to extend a warm welcome to Mr. Samuel Lewis-Navarro, Vice-President and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Panama.

As we debate the issue of general regulation and reduction of armaments as a means to strengthen collective security today, global military expenditure and the arms trade represent the largest spending in the world at over $1 trillion a year and keep rising. At the

same time, nearly 1 billion people in the world are living in extreme poverty, with all sorts of threats posed by global issues, such as epidemics, environmental pollution, climate change and terrorism, which are difficult to solve owing to, among other things, the lack of funds.

Those realities in the context of the post-cold-war period, the end of which promised the contrary, once again point to what the Secretary-General of our Organization rightly said back in 2004 in his note on the findings on the relationship between disarmament and development since 1987:

> "Excessive armament and military spending can have negative impact on development and divert financial, technological and human resources from development objectives [because]... their spread and availability can threaten physical safety, endanger stability and welfare and diminish social and economic confidence, thus discouraging investment and economic development and contributing to a cycle of poverty, underdevelopment and distress." (*A/59/119, para. 18*)

The outbreak or the continuation and intensification of hostilities in hot spots under examination by the Security Council, especially in Africa and even in the heart of Europe recently, further points to the fact that what the Secretary-General has warned of as a possibility was and continues to be a reality and makes more pertinent the commitment of Member States, as enshrined in Article 26 of the Charter,

> "to promote the establishment and maintenance of international peace and security with the least diversion for armaments of the world's human and economic resources".

Sharing the common understanding that the reduction of armaments and development are two distinct, yet mutually reinforcing processes that are linked by security in all its aspects, my delegation also shares the widely-held view that measures aimed at achieving the regulation and reduction of armaments as a means to strengthen collective security must be based on and carried out in the spirit of multilateralism and in accordance with international law and the United Nations Charter.

In that connection, we stress the central role of the United Nations, especially the General Assembly — whose membership has increased nearly fourfold since the birth of the Organization and its Charter — as well as its disarmament-related bodies, such as the Disarmament Commission and the Conference on Disarmament, which, to the general dismay of Member States, have been idle for many years without substantive agendas or work programmes.

While witnessing the constant rise in global military spending to more than $1 trillion per year, as I mentioned above — nearly 40 per cent higher than it was 10 years ago — but with only about $20 billion per year to spend on its programmes in all areas, the United Nations, which was founded with the purpose of maintaining international peace and security and achieving international cooperation in solving international problems of an economic, social, cultural or humanitarian character, must be able to contribute to narrowing the gap between what countries are prepared to allocate for military means, on the one hand, and to alleviate poverty and promote economic development, on the other.

By its resolution 1809 (2008), the Security Council underlines the importance of strengthening the capacity of regional and subregional organizations in conflict prevention, crisis management and post-conflict stabilization. Regional organizations obviously play an important role in enhancing the security of the States of their region and reducing the risk of regional conflict, thus contributing to the maintenance of international peace and security by promoting regional disarmament, taking into account the specific characteristics of each region and in accordance with the principle of undiminished security at the lowest level of armaments. The establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones in various parts of the world testifies to the role that regional organizations can play and indeed have played in nuclear disarmament and the non-proliferation regime, which is high on the agenda of the Security Council.

In the changed international context and with the emergence of terrorism, the tendency — here and there and now and then — to move away from seeking multilateral solutions to questions of disarmament and security, the phenomena of underdevelopment and poverty and the continued arms race in many regions of the world are contributing factors to the insecurity of many countries. It is therefore more important than ever to strengthen cooperation and coordination between the Security Council and other United Nations

bodies — above all, the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and the Peacebuilding Commission — as well as with regional and subregional organizations, in promoting collective security, armament regulation and disarmament, and demobilization and reintegration. Those should be complementary measures for peacekeeping and peacebuilding efforts and for ensuring implementation by Member States of their commitments under the international treaties to which they are party. Viet Nam looks forward to contributing to strengthening such cooperation and coordination.

Once again, I thank you, Sir, and your delegation for this initiative and for the draft presidential statement, which we are ready to support.

Sir John Sawers (United Kingdom): I would like to begin by thanking you, Sir, for convening this meeting today and to pay tribute to your lifelong commitment to disarmament, both regionally and globally. It is very fitting that, as a Nobel Peace Prize laureate, you are here presiding over the Council with its primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. I thank you for being here.

We also welcome back to the Council Vice-President Lewis-Navarro of Panama and thank him for his statement. Our thanks go also to Mr. Sergio Duarte, High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, for his concise briefing.

The United Kingdom shares the determination to look afresh at the challenges facing us in the field of disarmament. We are working with partners to strengthen all pillars of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and to promote an arms trade treaty to implement high common standards for conventional arms exports, which are, of course, the weapons of daily destruction around the world. And it is why, for the United Kingdom, arms control, counter-proliferation and disarmament are about finding common ground to enhance our collective security, which is at the heart of everything we do at the United Nations, and especially here in the Security Council.

The United Kingdom also welcomes the principle promoted by this debate of mainstreaming disarmament into development policy. That is particularly important in the fields of conventional weapons and small arms and light weapons, and in the disarmament and demobilization of armed groups and their reintegration into their communities.

The United Kingdom is committed to strengthening the Non-Proliferation Treaty. We will show zero tolerance for proliferation and we will work for a world free from nuclear weapons. There must be progress on both sides of that, on both nuclear disarmament and on non-proliferation and to support progress on non-proliferation, we need a reinvigorated approach to nuclear disarmament. We are therefore calling for further reductions in the major nuclear arsenals and for progress on the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and negotiations towards a fissile material cut-off treaty.

In the meantime, the United Kingdom has been undertaking innovative work to address some of the technical challenges posed by disarmament. We have reduced our nuclear arsenal to just 160 operationally available warheads and we have offered to host a conference for the permanent five to discuss the technical aspects of disarmament verification.

On the other side of the coin, proliferation of the nuclear-fuel cycle poses grave dangers to regional and global stability, as it paves the way for the proliferation of nuclear weapons technology. Multilateral nuclear fuel assurances provide a possible way for States to enhance their collective security and their energy diversity by exercising their rights under article IV of the NPT, while avoiding proliferation of the most sensitive nuclear technologies.

Proliferation concerns are not only limited to nuclear technologies and material; other emerging technologies contain threats as well as opportunities, which is why the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention remain so important in this century.

On small arms and light weapons, the United Kingdom welcomes the progress at the Biennial Meeting of States on implementing fully the United Nations Programme of Action, and collectively we have made real progress in the important field of anti-personnel landmines, covered by the Ottawa Convention. I would like to confirm the United Kingdom's strong support for the universalization of the Convention and for the worldwide implementation of its provisions on stockpile destruction and mine clearance. The United Kingdom is the third-largest donor to mine clearance programmes in affected

countries, where anti-personnel landmines still pose a serious humanitarian threat.

The United Kingdom also welcomes the successful negotiation, earlier this year at the Dublin Conference, of a new treaty that bans cluster munitions, a whole class of weapons. The end result is a Convention that will make a major contribution to addressing the humanitarian threat posed by such weapons. We plan to sign the Convention on Cluster Munitions on 3 December, in two weeks' time. My Prime Minister has made it a personal commitment to work with other countries to promote the widest possible adherence to the norms of the new Convention. We in the United Kingdom have ceased to use such weapons. We have begun the process of withdrawing them from service and placing them in a destruction programme, and we have also added cluster munitions to the list of items prohibited for transfer.

I would like to conclude my remarks by reaffirming the importance of the proposed arms trade treaty. Achieving such a treaty is a goal that you, Mr. President, have championed at the United Nations and in Central and Latin America, and I pay tribute to your personal commitment. An arms trade treaty has a significant role to play in ensuring collective international security. With one person killed every 90 seconds by a conventional weapon, the irresponsible trade in conventional weapons creates instability and has a direct impact on countries' ability to deliver sustainable development and to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. An arms trade treaty would address the issue of irresponsible trade and would thereby contribute positively to international peace and security.

A number of countries have concerns about the proposal, and those concerns must be addressed openly and honestly. But a properly regulated arms trade would be to the benefit of all: to our peacekeepers around the world; to law enforcement and security forces in Member States; to the business community that manufactures and sells arms and wants to do that responsibly; and, above all, to ordinary people whose lives are shattered by our failure to control the unscrupulous and irresponsible trade in arms.

Thank you once again, Mr. President, for bringing this issue to the Security Council and for elevating our debate through your presence.

Mr. Khalilzad (United States of America): I would like to thank the Costa Rican delegation for bringing us together for a discussion of this important subject. Costa Rica's dedication to fostering peace through the promotion of disarmament is well known, as is your personal commitment, Mr. President; we are honoured by your presence. We also welcome the presence of Mr. Samuel Lewis-Navarro, Vice-President and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Panama, and we thank Mr. Sergio Duarte for his statement.

The United States recognizes the role of the United Nations in promoting the maintenance of international peace and security and the responsibilities of all United Nations Member States in that regard. To that end, the United States has taken a leading role in promoting arms reduction and fighting proliferation, particularly of weapons of mass destruction.

The United States recognizes that multilateral engagement is an important tool in curbing armaments and in blocking weapons proliferation. Treaties can play a role, but so can voluntary associations. In 2003, the United States launched the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI), a dynamic, active approach to the global proliferation problem. Today, more than 90 participating member States work voluntarily and in concert, employing their national capabilities to develop a broad range of legal, diplomatic, economic, military and other tools to interdict threatening shipments of weapons of mass destruction and missile-related equipment and technologies. The United States also participates alongside 39 other States in the Wassenaar Arrangement, a voluntary export control regime that governs both conventional weapons and dual-use items. We hope that additional States will join the United States in participating in the PSI and adopting the Wassenaar Arrangement's export control list. The United States has also taken a leading role in reducing the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons through its assistance programmes in such areas as destruction, stockpile security and the marking of weapons.

Of course, action within the United Nations is also important. The United States, for its part, has introduced a draft resolution at the current session of the General Assembly that reaffirms Member States' commitment to full compliance with arms control agreements and commitments. The United Nations has also developed a Programme of Action on the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons and produced a

consensus report (A/61/1028) that includes the recommendations of experts on verification in all its aspects.

More specifically, the Security Council has a role to play as well. Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) is an unprecedented initiative and a good example of the type of contribution that the United Nations can make to promoting international cooperation in the area of non-proliferation. While the scope of the resolution includes terrorist activities, it was designed to address the full range of proliferation activities, including those of non-State actors that provide proliferation-related services. The resolution also places requirements on United Nations Member States to take specific measures to criminalize activities that can contribute to or support proliferation activities.

The Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004) has an important role to play in promoting implementation of the resolution. In addition, the resolution advances the economic interests of nations seeking to become global economic suppliers of goods and services.

The United States and several other States have extensive programmes that can help Member nations implement resolution 1540 (2004), and we stand ready to do more. We believe that the Council can play a role in bolstering that effort and others, not least by calling on States to live up to their obligations under Council decisions and other binding undertakings.

The reduction of armaments is an important goal for many United Nations Member States, and, particularly under the right circumstances, it can increase security and contribute to enhanced development.

Mr. Churkin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We are gratified to welcome Mr. Óscar Arias Sánchez, President of Costa Rica, to the presidency of the Security Council.

The issues of disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control cannot be considered in isolation from today's overall security situation. The Russian Federation tirelessly advocates the development of an equitable system of collective security, which would enable us to address together the growing spectrum of threats and challenges.

The very logic of the development of today's international relations reveals the bankruptcy of unilateral and bloc mechanisms, in particular those based on force. We believe that an important role in strengthening the collective security architecture must be played by peacekeeping mechanisms, in particular those established within the United Nations framework. Here, significant experience has been accumulated and numerous successes achieved. In that connection, we note that United Nations activities for the maintenance of peace are constantly evolving in both conceptual and operational terms. That promotes the resolution of emerging problems and effective responses to new political realities.

At the same time, we note that, to date, the problem of ensuring the level of military expertise required for action within the framework of United Nations peacekeeping operations remains unresolved. The thrust of Russia's initiative, proposed at the Millennium Summit, to intensify the activities of the Military Staff Committee lies in involving that body in fact-finding missions and inspection groups to assess the combat readiness of troops and equipment allocated for participation in peacekeeping operations. That would provide timely and relevant information to the Security Council. As experience has shown, there is a growing understanding at the United Nations that we must improve the quality of our work on various aspects of the problem as we make decisions relating to United Nations peacekeeping. I should also like to remind members that we complemented our initiative with a proposal that the Committee work in a full format with all 15 Security Council members.

In today's complex international situation, it is more pressing than ever to ensure collective actions and to strengthen the legal basis for regional and global policies based on the United Nations Charter and the recognition of the indivisibility of security and development in today's world. It will be possible to achieve that task only by setting up open collective security mechanisms including in the Euro-Atlantic region. We are convinced that security is needed not from each other, and especially not against any person, but from transboundary threats.

The President of the Russian Federation, Dmitry Medvedev, set out a positive alternative to the further escalation of tensions in the Euro-Atlantic area. I refer to the development of a legally binding treaty on European security. In our view, such a document would

enable us to create a sound system of comprehensive, unitary and indivisible security on the basis of the principles of polycentricity, the primacy of international law, and the central role of the United Nations, the inadmissibility of isolating particular States, and the existence of zones with different levels of security. Our proposal for a positive programme of action would enable us, in practice, to establish a fair basis for cooperation among all States.

Preserving the primacy of the disarmament process, non-proliferation and arms control is the alternative to expensive confrontation and a new arms race. The further legal and treaty development of the disarmament process, including on a multilateral and universal basis, must be carried out in a spirit of strategic openness.

Russia, for its part, spares no effort to ensure that disarmament, first and foremost nuclear disarmament, is ongoing and irreversible in nature. Since 1991, the Russian nuclear arsenal has been reduced by a factor of five and the overall stockpile of tactical nuclear weapons by three-quarters. The Moscow Treaty on Strategic Offensive Reductions is being implemented successfully. The Strategic Offensive Arms Reduction Treaty (START) has fully achieved its objectives and will expire in December 2009. We are talking with the United States about a new legally binding treaty to replace it. We believe that it could include all the best elements of START and set out new, lower verifiable levels for strategic delivery means, i.e. intercontinental ballistic missiles, under-water ballistic missiles and heavy bombers, as well as the warheads carried by them.

We want to bolster existing non-proliferation regimes of weapons of mass destruction, including the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). Global security and protection against possible missile threats would be strengthened by making the Treaty on the Elimination of Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles universal.

In the First Committee in October 2007, Russia and the United States made a joint statement calling upon all interested States to discuss possible universalization of the innovative Treaty on intermediate and short-range missiles regime by eliminating ground-based ballistic and cruise missiles with a range of 500-5,500 kilometres, leading to the destruction of that class of missiles and the termination of any related programmes.

Issues of strategic stability are directly related to the problem of States' activities in outer space. A key area of work here remains developing effective measures to prevent the deployment of any class of weapons into outer space in order to prevent turning outer space into a new area of military confrontation and a potential theatre for military activities.

In February 2008, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, Sergey V. Lavrov, on behalf of Russia and China, introduced at the United Nations Disarmament Conference in Geneva a draft of such a treaty. We expect that the Conference will step up activities in this field. We call for support for the initiative submitted by Russia and other member States of the Collective Security Treaty Organization and for accession to the moratorium on the first deployment of any type of weapons in outer space. Measures aimed at strengthening transparency and confidence in space activities would serve to reduce motivation to deploy weapons in outer space.

We are grateful to all States having backed Russia's initiative in the First Committee. Here, I am referring to the traditional draft resolution on this issue.

Another priority for us lies in the field of international information security. The aim of our efforts within the United Nations is to help enhance the security of the international information space, prevent humankind from being dragged into another cycle of arms race — this time at a qualitatively new technological level — preserve resources intended for development purposes, including financial resources, and contain the risks of information and communication technologies and resources being used for purposes running counter to the interests of States in the sphere of security. We would also like to thank all States that supported the draft resolution on the subject submitted in the First Committee.

Turning now to control of conventional weapons transfers, we are seeing today a sort of renaissance, running from manufacturing to stockpiling and use by importers. Serious concerns arise from the illicit trafficking in arms, first and foremost small arms and light weapons, which heightens the likelihood of them falling into the hands of terrorists and irresponsible users.

The crisis in the Caucuses in August showed the inadequacy of current arms transfer mechanisms, including the various codes and understandings within the framework of the Wassenaar Arrangement. Clearly, the time has come to conduct a serious study of this field, determine the main problems and outline ways to resolve them.

By way of conclusion, I would like to note that Russia backs the adoption of a presidential statement on strengthening international security and the regulation of armaments. We anticipate that this will provide significant political impetus to our common efforts in this field.

Mr. Kafando (Burkina Faso) (*spoke in French*): I would like to tell you, Mr. President, how happy our delegation is to see you personally chairing this important debate on the strengthening of collective security through the reduction of armaments and general regulation, which is a pressing subject and goes right to the heart of the Security Council's responsibilities.

We are also grateful to your delegation, Mr. President, for the concept paper that was drawn up and for the draft presidential statement that was proposed.

A safer world, forever rid of war, was the main objective that guided the founders of the United Nations. Today, this untiring pursuit of security for all continues to be of our concern and States seek to join efforts, in particular diplomatic and military efforts, to preserve humanity from a new specter of war, which, this time, could lead to a nuclear disaster.

For this, we must have rules that take into account the control, reduction and regulation of armament. With this in mind, we need to recognize that, from its beginnings, the United Nations has contributed to establishing the present disarmament architecture, in particular, enabling the Conference on Disarmament to negotiate and conclude the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, as well as the Conventions on chemical and biological weapons.

However, we still face an unprecedented threat that is due essentially to the excessive accumulation of weapons of mass destruction, such as nuclear, chemicals and biological weapons, as well as to the constant increase in military budgets and the risk of the militarization of outer space.

Additionally, cluster munitions, conventional weapons, and small arms and light weapons continue to cause enormous suffering to civilian populations as well as significant material damage.

In view of this situation, we can only deplore the lethargy in the two frameworks of multilateral negotiation, that is, the Conference on Disarmament and the United Nations Disarmament Commission.

We have not met with any further success with regard to the efforts to strengthen the legal framework of and cooperation on these issues undertaken by the General Assembly, and so we must recognize that, in spite of sustained action within the United Nations, which has contributed to greater awareness of the need to act, the United Nations has not been able to carry out its mandate with necessary effectiveness. All of this undermines the objective of collective security, of which, in terms of the Charter, the United Nations in general, and the Security Council in particular, are guarantors.

Although we recognize that control and regulation of armaments is a very complex task vis-à-vis the interests at stake, Burkina Faso is convinced that the need to ensure effective security should give that task priority over any other consideration.

Apart from the numerous victims they take, these arms are a constant threat for flare-ups in entire regions. That is why we need without delay to address the challenge of their control and regulation. In the hope of succeeding in this area, Burkina Faso believes that we need to seek a new consensus around collective security, with responsibility shared by all actors on the international stage.

This is indeed possible, in the light of the convincing results obtained by other actors outside of the United Nations framework, such as the achievements of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), in the areas of control, limitation and regulation of armaments in the delicate subregion of West Africa. In June 2006 the member countries of ECOWAS established the Convention on Small Arms, Light Weapons, Their Ammunition, and Other Associated Materials with the purpose of regulating small arms and light weapons within ECOWAS and reducing their proliferation. Neither

should we forget the historic agreement reached in Dublin on the Convention on Cluster Munitions. That agreement was reached outside of the current United Nations disarmament framework by a number of States, civil society, the International Committee of the Red Cross and the United Nations. Those two examples show how important a role can be played on the international scene by other actors in the realm of disarmament.

Burkina Faso adheres to the principles and recommendations of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, and we are therefore setting out to effectively implement these measures nationally through training and control of weapons flows, carried out by our National Commission against small arms and light weapons and the High National Authority to combat the importation and exportation of small weapons, their ammunition and their use.

As a State party to the main legal instruments on disarmament, Burkina Faso will continue to support all relevant initiatives.

To conclude, in order to give fresh impetus to our collective action to reduce and regulate armaments, my delegation wishes to make the following specific proposals: renew the disarmament architecture by proposing new approaches; strengthen confidence-building measures among producer countries; ensure compliance with and strengthen the present legal framework; strengthen and support the capacities of regional and subregional organizations; and strengthen international cooperation.

Mr. Natalegawa (Indonesia): Let me first of all join previous speakers in thanking the delegation of Costa Rica for convening this open debate and in welcoming you, Mr. President, as you personally chair this very important high-level debate. We should also like to warmly acknowledge the participation of His Excellency Mr. Samuel Lewis-Navarro, Vice-President and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Panama.

The issue of collective security and disarmament continues to be one of the most critical and enduring issues on the agenda of the United Nations. At a time when the world needs precious resources for development, there is no doubting the need to reduce, and eventually eliminate, nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, as well as to restrain the vast military expenditures on conventional arms. This is even more urgent when considered in the light of the need to address several global economic and social crises and achieve the Millennium Development Goals and other development goals. Military spending and the insecurity caused by proliferation emerge clearly as challenging hurdles to the implementation of our multilateral objectives.

The United Nations and its bodies have been seized of this issue for a long time. Numerous decisions and resolutions of the General Assembly have long been devoted to disarmament. Yet, large stockpiles of weapons of mass destruction still threaten our existence. On top of the insecurity that this has caused, countries continue to increase military spending and invest in even more armaments in the quest for a higher level of security. Resources that ought to be invested in peace and development are thrown into this effort, which is fuelled by the fear that by disarming or reducing armaments they would compromise their security. A way must be found to end this trend.

Indonesia has been among the countries that seek to break that vicious cycle by consistently supporting the objective of regulating arms, and of disarmament, particularly as regards weapons of mass destruction. It is our firm belief that reduction in armaments and the total elimination of weapons of mass destruction would create a stable atmosphere and the confidence to further increase the level of security.

In the face of stagnation in the efforts towards disarmament and the regulation of armaments — most conspicuously the inability of the Conference on Disarmament to move forward with its work for over a decade now — and the continuing increase in global military expenditure, we think this is an opportune time for the Security Council to make a contribution to the effort to find a solution.

We, therefore, encourage the Council to play its proper role, in cooperation with the General Assembly and other relevant bodies. However, in doing so, we would like to emphasize that the Council should not act as a legislative body. Whatever plan is formulated by the Council should consistent with Article 26 of the United Nations Charter, be submitted to Member States for their consideration.

We believe that, as a complement to multilateral arrangements, a regional approach to collective

security and disarmament may contribute to enhancing efforts towards arms reduction and confidence-building measures. On the model of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Security Community, regional security would be based on sharing norms and rules of good conduct in inter-State relations, effective conflict resolution and prevention mechanisms and post-conflict peacebuilding activities. It would also promote political development, which would reinforce political stability. The shaping and sharing of norms in ASEAN is also crucial to building peace in the wider Asia-Pacific region. The Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia is a code of conduct for relations between ASEAN and external Powers. Signatories and acceding States renounce the use of force and bind themselves to peaceful settlement of disputes in the region, serving as a model for other regions. The South-East Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone is a further ASEAN contribution to the non-proliferation and disarmament agenda.

Indonesia advocates a world in which financial and other resources now being squandered on the acquisition, development and maintenance of armaments are allocated to pressing humanitarian and development needs, both by countries that manufacture and produce arms and by those who trade in or purchase them.

We would therefore appreciate a more active role by the Security Council on the issue of reduction and regulation of armaments, and disarmament, like that of other forums. But, more important, regardless of the forum, we call for political will among all Member States to recognize this issue for its unusual win-win potential: to strengthen international peace and security while also liberating immense resources worldwide that can be used to guarantee development and general human advancement.

Mr. Terzi di Sant'Agata (Italy): At the outset, Mr. President, I wish to express our deepest appreciation for your presence today. Our appreciation goes also to the delegation of Costa Rica for convening this debate on strengthening collective security through general regulation and reduction of armaments.

I have been asked by my Government to convey to Your Excellency a sincere welcome, underlining the high significance of you presiding over this Council today. I would also like to express appreciation to the Vice-President and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Panama, His Excellency Samuel Lewis-Navarro, for being here today and delivering his statement, and to the High Representative of for Disarmament Affairs, Mr. Duarte, for his statement.

Italy aligns itself with the statement that the representative of the French presidency of the European Union will deliver on behalf of the Union.

Today's debate provides us with an opportunity to examine the relationship between disarmament and peace and security and to reaffirm our commitment to an effective multilateral system centred on the United Nations as the best framework for coordinated action in this field.

The link between peace and security, development and human rights is clear and undisputed. We are all committed to pursuing these goals together, knowing that there can be no peace and security without the fulfilment of basic needs and no economic development without the rule of law and respect for human rights.

This connection between security, development and human rights means that gains in one area translate into positive consequences for the other two. Disarmament can indeed free up resources for development, while an effective collective security system can reduce the need for military expenditures by individual States. Member States should feel that their security concerns are better addressed in a multilateral framework than in an arms race. Strengthening collective security arrangements at both the global and regional levels can therefore generate the confidence needed to promote disarmament.

The Security Council has a specific and special role to play. To be credible, it must be able to address crises at an early stage, prevent them from degenerating into open conflicts and find solutions when they do. Close cooperation with regional organizations and arrangements is often crucial. The Council has often debated the role of regional organizations and favoured their role in managing the crises that concern them directly. A new security consensus to effectively face today's multifaceted threats should be based on a close relationship between the Security Council and regional organizations.

In 1993, the United Nations Disarmament Commission adopted guidelines and recommendations for regional approaches to disarmament. Regional and

global approaches to disarmament are complementary and should be pursued simultaneously. The toolbox of arms control and confidence-building measures developed in Europe, for example, could make a useful contribution to the global efforts of the United Nations.

In addition to the Security Council's primary responsibility for the maintenance of peace and security, we would like to highlight the efforts of other United Nations bodies, namely the General Assembly, its two subsidiary bodies — the First Committee and the Disarmament Commission — and the Conference on Disarmament. The United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs and its regional centres also play an important role.

The First Committee's role in setting the global disarmament agenda cannot be overstated. Nor can the Disarmament Commission's guidelines, which provide the relevant standards for the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones. Italy has always supported the fundamental norm-setting activities of the Disarmament Commission and is committed to the immediate start and early conclusion of negotiations of a non-discriminatory, universally applicable treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons.

Therefore, we fully support efforts to make these United Nations bodies more effective. Their broad membership makes them an expression of the entire international community. This is crucial, because United Nations efforts in the field of disarmament and international security cannot succeed unless they enjoy the broadest political support.

Mr. Zhang Yesui (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): At the outset, I wish to express a warm welcome to His Excellency Óscar Arias Sánchez, who has come to the United Nations to preside over today's Security Council meeting. The theme of this open debate is collective security and armaments regulation, a topic that is of vital importance to the maintenance of international peace and security. I would like to express my appreciation for this initiative by Costa Rica.

Our contemporary world is undergoing great changes and readjustments. The international security situation is also undergoing a complex and profound transformation. The latest developments have pointed to a need for the international community to consider and review its international security concepts against this new background.

The maintenance of peace and stability and the promotion of development and cooperation are aspirations shared by the international community. In our view, we should work in the following areas in order to promote international security and build a global consensus, so as to revitalize the international arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation process.

First, it is imperative to promote, on the basis of mutual trust, mutual benefit, equality and assistance, the common security of all countries and remove the root causes of the factors that endanger peace and security. While safeguarding their own security interests, all countries and groups of countries should fully respect and accommodate the legitimate concerns of other countries. Actions that are taken in disregard of the security interests of other countries and regions, or actions that undermine such interests, will ultimately diminish and weaken the credibility of the relevant principles of international law and may jeopardize the security of our nations.

Secondly, we must be committed to maintaining global strategic stability, keep advancing the process of nuclear disarmament and reduce the role of nuclear weapons in the national security context. The countries in possession of the largest nuclear arsenals should continue to reduce them drastically through verifiable and irreversible means. Effective measures should be taken to prevent the weaponization of — and an arms race in — outer space and ensure the peaceful use of outer space.

Thirdly, we should adhere to multilateralism, maintain and strengthen the existing mechanisms for international arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation and revitalize traditional multilateral bodies for arms control and disarmament. With globalization developing in depth, all countries are linked together and interdependent in the quest for security. No country can remain aloof or detached. Only by adhering to multilateralism and strengthening the authority, effectiveness and universality of such arms control and non-proliferation treaties as the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Biological Weapons Convention will it be possible to cope with the myriad challenges and enhance common security.

Fourthly, to address issues related to non-proliferation, it is vital to address their root causes and symptoms in an integrated manner and to pursue dialogue and negotiations as means to solve the related problems and ensure justice and non-proliferation. In international non-proliferation efforts, a balanced approach should be taken in handling the relationship between non-proliferation and the peaceful use of relevant technologies.

China has always worked to maintain and promote the international arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation process. China is ready to work with all other countries to promote multilateral arms control and the non-proliferation process.

Mr. Grauls (Belgium) (*spoke in French*): I would like to convey my gratitude to you, Mr. President, for having organized this thematic debate devoted to an especially sensitive topic, that of the regulation and reduction of armaments as a vector for peace and development. Your presence here today, Sir, gives our debate special significance. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon recently denounced "the vast resources that are consumed by the endless pursuit of military superiority" and made an urgent appeal for disarmament.

The United Nations Charter gives both the Security Council and the General Assembly a role to play in that regard. The main responsibility for maintaining international peace and security lies with the Security Council, while the particular mission of the General Assembly is to consider the principles for general cooperation in the maintenance of international peace and security, including those regulating disarmament and arms regulation.

We are compelled to note today that the significant efforts that have been made to bolster peace and security have been accompanied not by a decrease but by a worldwide increase in the resources consumed by armaments. Certainly, arms and security forces are the traditional tools for affirming sovereignty and indispensable instruments for establishing and maintaining security at the national and international levels. Certainly, the decision to invest in armed forces is a sovereign decision to be made by each State in the light of its place in the world and its threat perception. Certainly, investments will always be necessary to improve peacekeeping capacities. By actively developing its security and defence policy, the European Union and, through it, Belgium are seeking to contribute effectively to the maintenance of peace.

However, as we have witnessed a doubling in military expenditures over the past decade, it would be dishonest to attempt to justify preserving excessive military arsenals out of the sole concern of maintaining peace and security. Peace and security are also built using other means, and what the Charter and today's debate seek to remind us of is that the more we invest in those other means, the less we will need to invest in weapons.

We know what those other means are and we are using and developing them. They are bilateral and regional cooperation, the prevention of conflicts, mediation, peacebuilding and economic and social development. All those instruments contribute to increased collective security and thus can only lead to reduced recourse to arms.

Through its involvement, inter alia, within the Peacebuilding Commission, Belgium intends to contribute actively to programmes whose ultimate objective is to silence weapons for good. Disarmament and demobilization are in fact a necessary condition for the economic and social reconstruction of areas affected by conflict.

My country believes that a great step forward in disarmament would be taken if common international norms were adopted for the import, export and transfer of conventional weapons, including small arms and light weapons. Indeed, we know that it is difficult to prevent the destabilizing accumulation and chaotic dissemination of such weapons in conflict zones, and that they therefore claim a great many victims, mostly civilians. We therefore welcome the adoption by the First Committee of the General Assembly of a draft resolution, entitled "Towards an arms trade treaty" (A/C.1/63/L.59), defining a series of concrete steps to achieve progress in that field. Belgium's experience in the implementation of criteria adopted at the regional level leads us to fully endorse that approach and to participate actively in it.

An arms trade treaty would enhance human security — a very important concept for Belgium — as it would have a direct impact on the life of every individual, in particular in the most vulnerable strata of the population. Belgium has therefore resolutely committed itself in favour of banning anti-personnel landmines and cluster munitions. In the same spirit, my

country is actively participating in international efforts to put an end to the phenomenon of child soldiers. Belgium is guided in that respect by the same spirit in which it promoted the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction. Chemical weapons were used for the first time at Ypres, Belgium, during the First World War.

Generally speaking, multilateral disarmament and non-proliferation treaties clearly play a key role, be it with respect to conventional weapons or weapons of mass destruction. In that regard, the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on their Destruction deserve special mention. Belgium stresses the importance of strict compliance with those instruments, which should be ratified and implemented by all States Members of the United Nations.

Belgium welcomes your initiative, Mr. President, which leads us back to the basic aspirations of the Charter's authors. My country is convinced that it cannot but bolster the resolve of our Council to labour for peace and security with all the means at its disposal, both through armaments and "with the least diversion for armaments of the world's human and economic resources", as clearly prescribed in Article 26 of the Charter. We are convinced that today's debate will serve as a clarion call to enhance the effectiveness of the multilateral framework of our disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation policies.

Mr. Kumalo (South Africa): My delegation joins in welcoming you, Sir, to New York and thanks the delegation of Costa Rica for organizing this debate today. Your presence in New York is a clear demonstration of your commitment to the issues we are discussing today, particularly the maintenance of international peace and security.

We also welcome the Foreign Minister of Panama and thank Mr. Duarte for his briefing.

At the Millennium Summit and the 2005 World Summit, world leaders set out an ambitious plan that could help to eliminate poverty and to achieve development, peace and security for all. The international community did so in the certain knowledge that development is the only certain pathway to peace and security. Now that we are at the halfway point towards attaining the Millennium Development Goals, we continue to struggle to mobilize the requisite resources, while military expenditure worldwide continues to rise from an already extremely high level.

Today's debate is an important initiative to focus attention on the complex nexus that exists between collective security and development and on the need to regulate and reduce armaments so that scarce resources can be more appropriately directed towards realizing a better life for all.

We recognize the right to security and, in that context, the right to produce, procure and possess arms at a level that does not go beyond that required for the purposes of self-defence. South Africa has a national defence force that is actively involved in peacekeeping operations on the African continent.

Security is one of the most fundamental aspirations of humankind and is a basic human right. The United Nations Charter is premised on the notion of collective security, and the right to self-defence is explicitly set out in Article 51. That is why the Security Council is entrusted with the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security and has a wide range of powers under the Charter.

However, history has shown that the traditional approach in many parts of the world — that of seeking security through the acquisition of the most advanced weapons and by building up huge armies — has led to numerous conflicts, including two devastating world wars. The advent of nuclear and other highly destructive weapons has brought us to the point where collective security is threatened by the continued existence of the most destructive weapons.

Other principles of the United Nations Charter, specifically the principles of respect for sovereignty, refraining from the threat or use of force, the peaceful settlement of disputes and non-interference in the internal affairs of States, are all threatened when some countries seek a military advantage over the rest. Arms races between competing nations also consume scarce resources that could be better utilized to address the plight of the world's desperately poor and that adversely affect the right of peoples freely to determine their system of social and economic development.

Without infringing on the mandates of other United Nations bodies that work on this broad theme, it is possible, we believe, to point to some specific areas where the Security Council makes a constructive contribution and where it ought to do more. In our view, the Security Council's most profound contribution is to be found in its conflict resolution and prevention work and in the support it provides to existing disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control regimes. Through its good offices, the Security Council can help to promote security sector reform in countries emerging from conflict, including the integration and rationalization of armed forces that will be accountable to that Government and the people.

The Council could do far more — in particular through the example that can be set by its own members — to help cut the flow of weapons to all conflict-afflicted areas, and not just those that are subject to its arms embargoes. South Africa's own national arms control procedures are designed to prevent the sale of South African weapons to areas of conflict. In addition, through full compliance with both their disarmament and their non-proliferation obligations and a non-selective approach, members of the Security Council will restore confidence in the relevant multilateral instruments.

A second Security Council contribution would be more even-handed execution of its primary responsibility of maintaining international peace and security. The current situation, where the Council only acts in some arenas and in defence of the security of certain peoples, does little to contribute to an environment that is supportive of the efforts of States to implement their disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control obligations fully, thereby freeing up resources for development. One only has to look at the situation in Palestine and the wider Middle East region to see the disparities in the Council's actions.

A third contribution from the Security Council is through the achievement of a more effective and efficient collective security system through building on synergies between the United Nations and regional arrangements in terms of Chapter VIII of the United Nations Charter. South Africa has promoted this theme throughout our tenure in the Council, with a particular focus on cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union.

In conclusion, the 2005 World Summit Outcome (General Assembly resolution 60/1) affirms that development, human rights and collective security are the three interlinked and mutually reinforcing pillars that support the multilateral system. Peace and security issues are best addressed multilaterally and in accordance with international law. Moreover, as this important debate reminds us today, collective security and matters of war and peace should not be seen in isolation from the right of peoples to socio-economic development. Decisions on arms procurement and military expenditure affect us all.

Mr. Jurica (Croatia): It is our pleasure Mr. President, to welcome you to the Security Council today. I would like to thank you for your initiative in organizing this open debate on the strengthening of collective security through the general regulation and reduction of armaments. We would also like to welcome the Vice-President and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Panama, Mr. Samuel Lewis-Navarro, to this debate, as well as High Representative of the Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, Mr. Sergio Duarte.

Croatia recognizes the primary responsibility and the leading role of the Security Council in the maintenance of international peace and security: the Council is the only global body mandated with that task. In that context we see today's debate as a contribution to the fulfilment of that role. The notion of collective security is, in our opinion, compatible with the lofty duties and responsibilities of the Security Council. Consequently, we believe that it is useful for the Council to discuss issues related to the strengthening of collective security through the general regulation and reduction of armaments.

Similarly, Croatia would also like to stress the important role and activities of the General Assembly as well as other elements of the United Nations machinery in the field of the disarmament. Moreover, one should not overlook ongoing efforts and action at the multilateral, regional, bilateral and national levels on the issue of the strengthening of collective security through disarmament and the reduction of armaments.

Croatia would like to underscore the importance of regional and subregional organizations in matters relating to the improvement of international collective security. As a European country, Croatia especially values the active role and contribution to collective

security of a number of European regional organizations, most notably the European Union, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe.

The reduction of armaments can contribute to regional and subregional security and stability. A good example of a successful subregional arms control agreement is the adoption and implementation of the relevant provisions of annex I-B of the General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina of 1995, which contributed to collective security and stability in South-East Europe through the establishment of limitations and ceilings in conventional arms and armaments for the signatory countries to that agreement.

On a regional level, it should be mentioned that the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe — the CFE Treaty — has contributed to the security and stability of post-cold-war Europe. It is our hope that the difficulties encountered in confirming the CFE Treaty as adapted in 1999 will soon be overcome, so that the countries of South-East Europe will be given the chance to take part in this pan-European arrangement.

However, it is also very important to note that in some countries throughout the world the reduction of armaments and armies does not necessarily translate or lead to greater stability and security. There is an urgent need in some areas of the world to rebuild armed and police forces in order to deal with a wide spectrum of security challenges. In that context, we would like to note the importance of security sector reform in the process of post-conflict stabilization.

My delegation concurs with the notion that a reduction in military spending and expenditures can, where appropriate, contribute to committing more resources to development and can be important in achieving the Millennium Development Goals, although we believe that this idea should be coupled with the principle of responsible governance and should not negatively affect national or regional security and stability.

In the context of development, we would like to recognize once again that development, peace, security and human rights are interlinked and mutually reinforcing.

As regards the promotion of development through the reduction and prevention of armed violence, we would like to take particular note of the importance of the Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development, which was endorsed by more than 100 countries, including Croatia. In this framework, I would like to draw the Council's attention to a regional meeting that was held in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina, only a few days ago, at which the countries of South-Eastern Europe adopted the Sarajevo Declaration on Armed Violence and Development.

Croatia supports international efforts for more effective arms control. We would also like to stress the importance of compliance with agreements already in place, which greatly contributes to collective security and has beneficial effects on confidence between nations in their international relations. In this regard, Croatia would like to stress the utmost importance of upholding the relevant provisions of the Charter as they relate to the legal effect of decisions adopted by the Security Council.

We would also like to reiterate our support for existing international agreements and instruments in the field of non-proliferation, disarmament and arms control, which contribute positively to collective international and regional security and stability. In addition, we would also like to stress our support for the process that was recently launched aimed at the adoption of an arms trade treaty, as well as our support for the opening for signature of the Convention on Cluster Munitions later this year in Oslo.

Let me conclude by expressing once again Croatia's support for this debate and any further efforts aimed at strengthening the existing international system of collective security. Our discussions here today are a step in right direction.

Mr. Ripert (France) (*spoke in French*): It is an honour, Sir, to see you here today to preside over the work of the Council, as President of the Republic of Costa Rica and a Nobel Peace Prize laureate. We hope that this spirit of peace will suffuse our work here today. I would also like to convey my gratitude to Mr. Duarte for having delivered the Secretary-General's message, and to note with thanks the presence of the Vice-President of Panama, who honoured us with his statement.

It is my great privilege to take the floor on behalf of the European Union, Turkey, Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Albania, Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova align themselves with this statement. A complete version of my statement will be distributed.

The European Union acknowledges the main responsibility of the United Nations in peacekeeping and international security in all its forms. Non-proliferation, disarmament, and arms control represent complex challenges. The Charter of the United Nations grants the General Assembly a substantial scope of powers in this area. At the same time, these challenges by their very essence deal with international peace and security with which the Security Council is entrusted.

The European Union is an exemplary body with respect to stability and in combating these challenges. It exerts a stabilizing influence on its region, and has inspired in many of its neighbours a desire to join it. Its territory is subject to regional arms control arrangements, in the broad sense, which play a pivotal role as a result of geography during the cold war. That is also true of the Treaty on Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE).

This year, the European Union made a series of realistic and concrete disarmament proposals in the General Assembly, which promoted, inter alia, the universal ratification of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and the conclusion of its verification regime, as well as the dismantling, as rapidly as possible, of all nuclear testing facilities in transparent and open manner; the immediate start of negotiations without preconditions on a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons, as well as an immediate setting up of a moratorium on the production of such materials; the development by nuclear Powers of confidence-building and transparency measures; additional progress in ongoing discussions between the United States and Russia on the development of a legally binding post-START arrangement, as well as an overall reduction of the global stockpile of nuclear weapons, in accordance with article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), especially by those States with the largest arsenals; the inclusion of tactical nuclear weapons by States which possess them in the overall processes of arms control and disarmament, with a view to reducing and eliminating them; the opening of talks on a treaty banning short- and intermediate-range surface-to-surface missiles; universal adherence to and implementation by all of the Hague Code of Conduct.

The European Union also plays an active role against the indiscriminate dissemination of weapons, including through its code of conduct on arms transfers and its unqualified support for a draft arms trade treaty. The European Union is also pursuing a very active policy to counter the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and backs the United Nations action in this field. The European Union is also a key player in the fields of development and the promotion of human rights.

It is difficult, however, to impose rigid mechanisms to cover all regions of the world. In some regions, military expenditure indicators do not necessarily reflect a country's level of insecurity. Indeed, the United Nations current policies are to build up the military capabilities of regional organizations in certain developing areas. However, regionalization should not weaken universal norms, such as the NPT, the Ottawa Convention on the Prohibition, Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Antipersonnel Mines and on Their Destruction Ottawa Convention on anti-personnel mines and, of course, the draft Arms Trade Treaty. This perspective also includes non-universal norms, but which cover several areas at once, such as the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe. Finally, this view also encompasses bilateral norms which are especially important given security issues, such as the START regime.

The European Union would like to make a number of simple points. We must safeguard the achievements of the arms control agreements, especially those of the CFE Treaty. We must work tirelessly to reduce the bloodshed resulting every year from the illicit trafficking and excessive accumulation of small arms and light weapons. The non-proliferation regime is essential to our security, and given the important deadlines over the next two years, we must do our utmost to strengthen it. We must also make the best possible use of the three remaining years before us to arrive at a strong, binding and universal arms trade treaty. Finally, building upon our own experience, we would like to call for a strengthening of regional solidarity which quite clearly is a factor that bolsters peace and stability throughout the world.

Speaking in my national capacity now, I would like to briefly remind the Council of the unprecedented transparency measures and initiatives announced on 21 March by the President of the French Republic. I am referring here, first and foremost, in the nuclear field, to the visit to our former fissile material production facilities which have now been dismantled which was carried out by representatives of the Disarmament Commission on 16 September. I am referring here to the significant reduction of the configuration of our forces which was announced as well as to an announcement regarding the size of our national arsenal, which was made public on 21 March. Finally, I would add that France, of course, backs the draft presidential statement that has been submitted to us.

Mr. Mubarak (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) (*spoke in Arabic*): It is an honour indeed, Sir, for us to see you presiding over today's meeting, which is devoted to a debate on an extremely important issue. We welcome you personally, Sir, both as President of Costa Rica and as President of the Security Council. We also welcome the Vice-President and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Panama, Mr. Samuel Lewis-Navarro.

At the outset, my delegation would like to express its gratitude to the delegation of Costa Rica for having organized this important meeting on the maintenance of collective security through general regulation and reduction of armaments, which we believe will contribute to the Security Council's efforts in that regard.

Achieving collective security for all States continues to be the ultimate purpose for which the Security Council was established. Article 24 of the Charter of the United Nations confers upon the Council the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security and mandates it to act on behalf of all Member States.

Six decades have transpired since the establishment of the Security Council. However, collective security remains an elusive goal for every State. In spite of certain indicators that point to genuine successes and the historic circumstances that have long guided the actions of the Council, it is quite clear that the current international circumstances provide a more appropriate environment than that which prevailed during the decades of the cold war. That more propitious environment should enable the United Nations to play its rightful role in promoting collective security, disarmament and the regulation of armaments. However, all of us must bear in mind that a more conducive international environment in itself is insufficient to improve the effectiveness of the Council. Among other matters, there is first and foremost a need to improve the Council's legitimacy.

In the 2004 report (see A/59/565) of the Secretary-General entitled "A more secure world: our shared responsibility", which was prepared by his High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change, several terms are used repeatedly, such as: "a threat to one is a threat to all". Paragraph 24 of the report also states that "Every State requires the cooperation of other States to make itself secure". Those concepts are now indisputable and have become mere platitudes.

The regulation of disarmament and arms control can undoubtedly serve to promote collective security for all States, small and large. However, the regulation of armaments should take place in the context of comprehensive and multilateral negotiations in which all States participate. In the era of globalization, where a revolution in information and communication technologies has taken place, the regulation of armaments, disarmament and non-proliferation are indeed of growing importance, for they have an impact on every State in one way or another. Those issues must therefore be addressed through international and multilateral agreements and treaties under the auspices of the United Nations. Multilaterally negotiated and implemented disarmament and arms reduction agreements are the appropriate mechanisms through which States parties can consult and cooperate to find solutions to any problem that may arise with regard to the objectives or implementation of the provisions of those instruments.

International cooperation, in particular between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations, serves to strengthen collective security. Given their increasing potential, the primary role they play in the area of preventive diplomacy and their capacity to understand the genuine reasons for conflict in a given region — which in turn enables them to contribute to the prevention or resolution of conflicts — such cooperation should be strengthened in line with the provisions of Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations.

My country believes that there is a very close link between disarmament, development and human rights. There can be no development without security and stability, and vice versa. It is therefore clear that disarmamcnt and arms control cannot but have a positive impact on development, security and stability.

A very paradoxical situation exists with regard to global military expenditures and the various aspects of socio-economic underdevelopment — including hunger, poverty and disease — that afflict more than two thirds of humankind. The excessive acquisition of armaments — which, according to United Nations statistics, currently accounts for $1 trillion in spending annually — consumes a far greater share of human, natural, financial and technological resources than it should. That places a heavy burden on the economies of all States. It also has an impact on trade, financial flows and technology exchange at the global level. The Group of Governmental Experts established pursuant to General Assembly resolution 57/65 to consider that issue at the international level concluded that global military spending, which had begun to decline slightly in the 1990s, began to rise again since 2001. Consequently, defence budgets have grown throughout the world, serving to accentuate a climate of insecurity, fear and mistrust.

The international community has committed itself to devoting part of the resources freed up as a result of the implementation of disarmament and arms reduction agreements to socio-economic development. That should contribute significantly to resolving numerous problems associated with poverty and the spread of disease and, in turn, help to achieve collective security.

In that regard, Mr. President, we believe that your country serves as an example that the world should both welcome and emulate. While you have been fortunate as regards geography, it is quite clear that it has been the will of your people that has led you down this path. We wish to express our gratitude to your delegation for preparing both the concept paper for this meeting and the draft presidential statement before us which we support.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of Costa Rica.

A curious tale from Scandinavian mythology tells of two kings condemned to fight one another for eternity. If one succeeded in killing the other, the victim would rise again to continue their struggle until the last day of the world. The story has several versions, but, in all of them, the kings and their armies are revived each morning with new weapons, ready to take to the field of battle once more. This fantasy, product of a warrior culture, became a painful premonition of the events that would mark, with blood, the history of the twentieth century: an escalation of weapons, enemies, threats and war that ended the lives of hundreds of millions of people and forced us into the trenches of international insecurity.

There lies the reason for the creation of this Security Council: in the search for solutions to the endless battle within the human species, fed by the frenzy of the arms race. It is unlikely that any organization has ever been set a more ambitious task than that. And it is unlikely that any organization has faced more difficult choices. Many of those dilemmas remain to be resolved but their answer can be found, without a doubt, in the content of the Charter of the United Nations. In 1945, with the smoke still clearing after the worst war in human memory, the founders of this Organization wrote in Article 26 of the Charter of the United Nations:

> "In order to promote the establishment and maintenance of international peace and security with the least diversion for armaments of the world's human and economic resources, the Security Council shall be responsible for formulating, with the assistance of the Military Staff Committee referred to in Article 47, plans to be submitted to the Members of the United Nations for the establishment of a system for the regulation of armaments."

The wording of that Article is no accident. It makes a statement of which this Council must take note, to the fullest extent of its meaning: spending on arms is a diversion of human and economic resources; that is to say, a use that is not correct. As a minimum, the Charter asks us to accept that excessive military spending exacts an infinite cost in opportunity.

These are not the delusions of a citizen of the first country in history to abolish its army and declare peace on the world. They are not the dreams of a Nobel Peace laureate. This is the text that holds up this building. It is the text that justifies any action of this Security Council. Article 26 has been, until now, a dead letter in the vast cemetery of intentions for world

peace. But in that place there also rests the possibility of reviving that intention; of giving it the meaning intended by those who precede us in this struggle.

"The least diversion of resources" means, first and foremost, finding alternatives to excessive military spending that do not damage security. One of those alternatives is to strengthen multilateralism. As long as nations do not feel protected by strong regional organizations with real powers to act, they will continue to arm themselves at the expense of their peoples' development — of the poorest, in particular — and at the expense of international security. The Security Council must support, as a guarantor of collective security, multilateral accords adopted in our various regional organisms. Costa Rica will work along these lines during the coming year as a way to generate an environment that allows for the gradual reduction of military spending.

Ours is an unarmed nation but it is not a naive nation. We have not come here to lobby for the abolition of all armies. We have not even come to urge the drastic reduction of world military spending, which has now reached $3.3 billion a day — which is shameful. But a gradual reduction is not only possible, but also imperative, in particular for developing nations.

I am well aware that neither this Organization nor this Council nor any of its Members can decide how much other countries spend on arms and soldiers. But we can decide how much international aid they receive and on which principles such aid is based. With the money that some developing nations spend on a single combat plane, they could buy 200,000 MIT Media Lab computers for students with limited resources. With the money they spend on a single helicopter, they could pay $100 monthly grants for a whole year to 5,000 students at risk of dropping out of school. The perverse logic that impels a poor nation to spend excessive sums on its armies and not on meeting the needs of its people is exactly the antithesis of human security and is ultimately a serious threat to international security.

That is why my Government has presented the Costa Rica Consensus, an initiative to create mechanisms to forgive debts and support with international financial resources those developing countries which increase spending on environmental protection, education, healthcare and housing for their people and decrease spending on weapons and soldiers. In other words, this initiative seeks to reward developing countries, whether poor or middle-income, that divert increasingly fewer of their economic and human resources to the purchase of arms, just as stipulated in Article 26 of the Charter of the United Nations. Today, I ask members for their support in making the Consensus of Costa Rica a reality.

I also ask members for their support for the arms trade treaty that Costa Rica, along with other nations, presented to the United Nations in 2006. This treaty seeks to prohibit the sale of arms to States, groups or individuals, when there is sufficient reason to believe that they will be used to violate human rights or international law. I do not know how much longer we can survive unless we realize that it is just as terrible to kill many people, little by little, every day, as it is to kill many people in a single day. The destructive power of the 640 million small arms and light weapons that exist in the world, 74 per cent of which are in the hands of civilians, has proven to be more lethal than that of nuclear weapons and constitutes one of the principal motors of national and international insecurity.

Costa Rica knows that the members of this Council include some of the countries that top the list for the sale and purchase of small arms and light weapons in the world. But my country also knows that those nations have recognized terrorism and drug trafficking as serious threats to international security. International organized crime depends on arms trafficking, which until now has flowed with terrifying freedom across our borders, with the result that these same powerful nations suffer the consequences. Although the treaty would not eliminate the existence of such criminal groups, it would certainly limit their operations.

If we do not succeed with these measures, if the Costa Rica Consensus does not win the support of developed nations and if the arms trade treaty sinks in the waters of this organization, our pursuit of the Millennium Development Goals will become nothing more than the impossible dream of a world that, like Sisyphus, labours without rest towards an unattainable goal.

We are working to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger and, yet, armed conflicts constitute the principal cause of hunger in our world. We are working to improve health care, particularly maternal health and

the fight against AIDS and malaria. Yet, military spending drains millions of dollars from the health-care budgets of poor countries. The Millennium Development Goals were brave words, but they will never be more than words if we do not regulate arms or devise incentives to reduce global military spending.

Humanity can break the chain that, until now, has forced us to spend our centuries in an incessant and fratricidal struggle. That was the belief of those who founded this Organization. The enormous mission entrusted to this Council is not a failed expectation, but it is a rocky path. Maintaining peace will never be a simple task, nor will it ever be completed. But, I assure you that strengthening multilateralism, reducing military spending in favour of human development and regulating the international arms trade are steps in the right direction, the same as that marked out 63 years ago by those who, having survived atrocities, were nonetheless able to hope.

I resume my function as President of the Council.

I now give the floor to His Excellency Renan Fuentealba, Special Envoy of the President of Chile and Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Chamber of Deputies.

Mr. Fuentealba (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): First of all, Sir, let me thank you for having taken the initiative to convene this special Security Council debate on strengthening collective security mechanisms. I have the honour to greet you warmly on behalf of Her Excellency the President of Chile, Mrs. Michelle Bachelet Jeria.

At this meeting, we would like to add our country's voice to the consideration of a central topic for this Organization and the international community. In accordance with the preamble and Article 1 of the Charter, which defines the Organization's purposes, the United Nations was created, above all, as an instrument of collective security, designed to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war.

We must recognize that, in the face of an international context different from that which the signatories of the Charter were witnessing in 1945, it is essential to adapt our Organization to the requirements of an international security that involves new threats, while the traditional ones have not disappeared.

However, the process of reform of the United Nations, launched with the adoption by consensus of the 2005 World Summit Outcome (resolution 60/1), is pursuing a somewhat leisurely pace after some concrete achievements, such as the establishment of the Human Rights Council and the Peacebuilding Commission.

Chile has consistently advocated far-reaching reform of the United Nations that would enhance its credibility and legitimacy by reaffirming the principles and values of the Charter. We have already taken significant steps in that direction, but we must not neglect the challenge of reforming the Security Council, which is the centrepiece in the global process of the Organization's necessary reform. The present composition of the Security Council does not reflect the international reality of the twenty-first century. Clearly, the organ responsible for ensuring international peace and security must be more representative — possibly expanding its membership — and have more transparent and participatory working methods.

At a time when the bloodiest conflicts occur in intra-State scenarios but have a big impact on the surrounding neighbours, regional mechanisms must also be strengthened, so that they can play a preventive role, which is indispensable in every regard. In Latin America and the Caribbean, we have made progress that should be studied in other latitudes. We established the first nuclear-weapon-free zone in a densely populated region of the world. Under the 1991 Mendoza Commitment, we became a region free of biological and chemical weapons. In 2002, we established the South American Zone of Peace and Cooperation and today, in the framework of the Union of South American Nations, we are discussing a subregional defence initiative, based on confidence and cooperation. All those achievements can perfectly well be extrapolated to other regions, needing only political will to realize them.

The Charter of the United Nations restricts the legitimate use of force, through legitimate means of defence, to collective action to repel aggression and the exercise of the inherent right of individual or collective self-defence. For its part, the Final Document of the 1978 first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament called for the balanced reduction of conventional armaments, based on the principle of undiminished security of the parties with a view to promoting or enhancing stability at a lower military level.

Chile believes that it is essential to ensure transparency in the acquisition of legitimate means of defence. Such means are not only authorized by the Charter, but also derive from the principle of undiminished security for all States at the lowest possible level of armaments, as proclaimed in the above-mentioned Final Document. Transparency is, in turn, an essential prerequisite for mutual trust, which must lie at the very foundation of any action designed to consolidate international security.

In that regard, our region took a decisive step with the Inter-American Convention on Transparency in Conventional Weapons Acquisitions, which gives legal force to the standards previously established by the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms.

Yet, beyond the provisions of that Convention and with special emphasis as of 1990, Chile has pursued an open, prudent and sustainable policy to equip an essentially defensive military force. National defence policies have been debated intensely and democratically in our country and then universally disseminated in the National Defence Book, of which two editions have been published and a third is in preparation. Chilean military purchases, of which our neighbours were duly forewarned, sought to maintain the operational level of an armed force whose troop strength has been reduced in light of the national and regional situation, but which need to remain technically up to date to perform their constitutionally assigned tasks and participate effectively in peacekeeping operations. Indeed, Chile is currently involved in Haiti, Cyprus and Bosnia and Herzegovina. As a result of those policies, it has been possible to keep total defence spending at only 1.09 per cent of the gross domestic product and 6.36 per cent of government spending. Those percentages include all operating expenses of our armed forces.

My country has made mutual confidence-building one of the central elements of its foreign policy towards its neighbours and the region. Thus, we have created ongoing bilateral consultation mechanisms with Argentina and Peru, in both cases spearheaded by meetings of Ministers for Foreign Relations and Ministers of Defence, known as the 2-plus-2 meetings. On the substantive front, we have agreed with Argentina, with valuable assistance from the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, on a standardized methodology between the two countries for measuring military spending that introduces certainty and confidence as a sensitive aspect of our bilateral relationship. Moreover, building on the agreements on military assistance in natural disasters and those on the holding of joint exercises, we have progressed towards establishing the Southern Cross joint military force, which we have made available to the United Nations for deployment as of 2010.

In addition, observing that some of the regional security instruments and mechanisms are inadequate to meet current situations, Chile has established a network of bilateral defence cooperation agreements with various countries in our hemisphere and the rest of the world.

The international situation could shortly generate new opportunities for relaunching the multilateral disarmament agenda. The United States President-elect has made a promise to seek ratification of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, which, if kept, would be a positive development in the sad path followed over the past ten years by the forums of our disarmament machinery. That ratification would undoubtedly send a strong political signal that could influence the eighth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, in 2010.

We cannot allow ourselves another failure in the most important forum in the nuclear non-proliferation regime. Moreover, in response to voices of authority that have been raised recently both in this country and around the world, negotiations should be resumed to move towards gradual nuclear disarmament based on a reduction in the operational status of the remaining nuclear weapons.

Thirty years after the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, and twenty years after the most recent special session, Chile is convinced of the need to convene a fourth special session, at the highest political level, to conduct a far-reaching and forward-looking review of the goals and in particular, the multilateral forums and instruments in the fields of disarmament and international security. We are delighted that the First Committee of the General Assembly adopted by consensus draft decision A/C.1/63/L.22 on the subject a few days ago. As the principal representative organ of the United Nations, the General Assembly is called upon to negotiate the terms of a new road map.

Those are the principal challenges faced by the Organization on the issue of security. Chile is strongly committed to the work being done by the United Nations and is absolutely convinced that we bear the huge responsibility of bequeathing to future generations a world of peace and security.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I give the floor to the representative of Mexico.

Mr. Heller (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): Mexico would like to express its thanks to you, Sir, as President of Costa Rica, for the initiatives of your Government and for convening this important debate on an issue of such importance for maintaining international peace and security. We welcome your presence, as well as that of the Vice-President of Panama and the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs.

Mexico believes that strengthening collective security is closely related to conflict prevention. In view of the continuing increase in violence associated with conflicts around the world, it is necessary to promote the active participation of the international community, both through the search for solutions that will lead to greater security, and through the regulation and reduction of armaments and the promotion of development, especially at a time of serious crises in terms of food, energy and finance, whose consequences we cannot yet fully comprehend.

At the 2005 World Summit, the heads of State and Government recognized the link that exists between development, peace and security and human rights. In that context, Mexico has sought to promote and support various initiatives associated with those concepts, such as the establishment of the Peacebuilding Commission, which is an institutional link between security and development. My country has worked actively on the Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development and the regional Declaration of Guatemala, which drew attention to the extremely negative effects of insecurity and armed violence on development.

Mexico shares the view of Costa Rica that reduction in and regulation of armaments around the world would significantly contribute to strengthening international peace and security. The international community needs to promote initiatives on disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control in the context of working on the conflicts being dealt with by the Security Council.

For more than sixty years, Mexico has stated that the total elimination of nuclear weapons is the only rational path to guaranteeing collective security. All States that have nuclear arms and technology for non-peaceful ends should carry out systematic and transparent weapons-reduction actions, which would be effective means to increase confidence and promote the elimination of deterrence doctrine. States should comply equally and with the same conviction with their obligations on disarmament and non-proliferation, because those are two sides of the same coin and are definitely, politically and legally interdependent.

The same criteria should be applied to other weapons of mass destruction, such as chemical and biological weapons. Strengthening the framework of the various legal instruments of the disarmament regime and the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons in 2010 are essential priorities.

Mexico is concerned that the deployment of conventional arms is an emerging threat to international peace and security, to development and even to the survival and well-being of some States. It has been seen, and must be recognized, that the great majority of arms on the black market today belonged at some point to the legal arms trade.

Mexico is a country seriously affected by the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons and we attach the greatest priority to finding a solution for that problem, which is also linked to organized crime. We repeat that it is an issue that can only be solved through international cooperation and agreement based on the principle of shared responsibility, which requires the active participation of both governmental and non-governmental actors. All States, as well as manufacturers, exporters, arms brokers, non-governmental organizations and, obviously, the appropriate intergovernmental organizations, need to intensify their efforts to achieve the objectives of the Programme of Action on Small Arms.

The full implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and the Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts and Components and Ammunition, and the

regional conventions on the illicit trade in arms are necessary tools to avoid the destabilization caused by the arms trade. In that context, those instruments are a significant contribution to the maintenance of international peace and security.

In view of those elements, Mexico supported the initiative initially presented by Costa Rica in the First Committee to establish the feasibility of negotiating a treaty on arms trade. Mexico believes that a future arms trade treaty should establish arms trade criteria that are objective, non-discriminatory and in accordance with international law.

Mexico believes that a strong legal framework to combat the illicit trade in arms, together with effective controls on trade and the important work of the Security Council on arms embargoes in cases of armed conflict, are essential in order to guarantee international peace and security.

I also wish to announce that Mexico will sign, in Oslo in December 2008, the Convention on Cluster Munitions that was recently negotiated.

I will conclude by noting that Mexico, as a non-permanent member of the Security Council from 2009-2010 hopes to contribute decisively with a multidimensional security approach to the various conflicts around the world and will work to strengthen collective security based on international cooperation.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now call on the representative of Brazil.

Mrs. Viotti (Brazil) (*spoke in Spanish*): Permit me to thank you, President Arias, for the initiative of convening this meeting. Costa Rica's commitment to peace and disarmament is well known; your presence among us is an honour and highlights the importance of this debate. I should also like to recognize the participation of His Excellency Mr. Samuel Lewis-Navarro, Vice-President and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Panama, and to thank Ambassador Sergio Duarte, High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, for his presentation.

(*spoke in English*)

Collective security is a comprehensive concept that should include the consideration of initiatives geared towards conflict prevention and peacebuilding. Furthermore, the positive effects of development on peace and security should not be forgotten.

The collective security framework established in the Charter has yet to be fully implemented. Insufficient progress has been made regarding arms regulation, which includes arms control, arms transparency, non-proliferation and disarmament. A system of collective security must also ensure that breaches are promptly corrected. That entails the commitment and availability of resources under multilateral controls to create a credible deterrent.

The collective security framework of the United Nations was designed before the existence of nuclear weapons was widely known and before the further development of their means of delivery. Early on, the challenges posed by such weapons were a cause for concern among United Nations Members.

The early efforts in the Security Council to formulate plans on a system for the regulation of armaments were thwarted by the beginning of the cold war. It was up to the General Assembly, in the light of the mandate set out in Article 11 of the Charter, to continue the consideration of the issue. Thirty years ago, the General Assembly held its first special session on disarmament, during which the current disarmament machinery was established. Although some progress has been achieved, the goal of general and complete disarmament remains elusive.

It is a cause for concern that decades have gone by and nuclear disarmament has not been realized. That is compounded by other factors, such as the persistence of nuclear doctrines that admit first use; the lack of binding negative security assurances; the ongoing research on nuclear explosives, including subcritical tests; and maintaining readiness to resume full-scale testing. Other worrisome developments are new alleged justifications for retaining nuclear arsenals. No matter how carefully crafted, these appear to be increasingly inadequate in the face of the current international situation. On the one hand, it is evident that nuclear weapons are not a deterrent to new threats from non-State actors; on the other, holding on to nuclear arsenals only seems to encourage others to go down the same path. The cost of stalling on nuclear disarmament, in terms of non-proliferation, is all too clear.

Brazil believes that the issue of strengthening the collective security framework of the United Nations merits our best efforts. In that context, the regulation of armaments will play a substantial role. We remain committed to the endeavour of providing the

Organization with an adequate framework for effectively addressing challenges to peace and security.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now call on the representative of Norway.

Mrs. Juul (Norway): Let me start by thanking you, Mr. President, for this important meeting and for the opportunity that it provides for all United Nations Members to discuss essential disarmament and non-proliferation issues. The spread of weapons of mass destruction and the illegal proliferation of conventional weapons constitute a serious threat to international peace and security.

The protection of peace and security is the core of the mandate of the Security Council, and the Council has an important role to play in supporting international arms control through determined action. Norway fully supports the resolutions adopted by the Council regarding specific proliferations concerns. Norway welcomed the adoption of resolution 1540 (2004) and has provided funds to the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs for the promotion of that resolution at the regional level. But we must also recognize that global norms will have to be negotiated in relevant — and broader — multilateral bodies. It has been a firm Norwegian policy that multilateral arms control negotiations should be open to all United Nations Member States.

Regrettably, the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) is under growing strain. Equally regrettable are the unfulfilled expectations in the field of nuclear disarmament. While we applaud the significant reductions in nuclear arsenals that have taken place, we call for significantly deeper reductions on the basis of irreversibility, verification and transparency.

We are also increasingly impatient at the lack of progress in multilateral efforts to prevent a possible new arms race. We regret that the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) has not entered into force, and it is deplorable that it has so far been impossible to negotiate a treaty banning the production of fissile materials for weapons purposes. It is imperative that we make progress in that field in the coming year.

An erosion of the NPT would be a serious setback for multilateral non-proliferation efforts. Such an erosion would make a world free of nuclear weapons much more difficult to achieve. It is vital that all States parties to the NPT do their utmost to contribute to a successful outcome. Norway is seeking to contribute to that end in various ways, including the cross-regional Seven-Nation Initiative.

It is encouraging to note the renewed interest in achieving the full elimination of nuclear weapons. There is a growing consensus that the existence of tens of thousands of nuclear arms does not enhance our security. Nuclear disarmament is an integral part of our common non-proliferation efforts.

In February this year, Norway hosted an international conference on nuclear issues, attended by some of the leading experts from around the globe. A key message from the conference was the importance of the CTBT. A legally binding Test-Ban Treaty is crucial. We need new and deeper cuts beyond those provided for in existing arms control treaties. We need to explore ways to reduce the importance of nuclear arms in security policies, such as regional nuclear-weapon-free zones. We need to lower the operational status of nuclear weapons that are deployed. All political leaders and relevant stakeholders must be engaged. We must forge new alliances and work across traditional political and geographical dividing lines.

My Government is pleased to note that important results have been achieved in the field of eliminating categories of conventional weapons that cause unacceptable humanitarian harm. We applaud the landmark decision that was reached in Dublin on 30 May this year, when 107 States adopted the text of the Convention on Cluster Munitions. The new Convention prohibits all use, stockpiling, production and transfer of cluster munitions. It also deals with assistance to victims, the clearance of contaminated areas and the destruction of stockpiles.

The Convention is the outcome of the Oslo process, an open process that was launched in 2006 and that included States, civil society, the International Committee of the Red Cross and the United Nations. We have achieved a result that represents a significant strengthening of international humanitarian law. The Convention on Cluster Munitions will be opened for signature in Oslo on 3 December. All United Nations Member States have been invited to the Convention on Cluster Munitions Signing Conference.

Norway is convinced that the lessons learned from a humanitarian disarmament approach can be applied in

other areas, such as regulating the international trade in conventional weapons. My Government reaffirms its support for negotiations on a forward-looking arms trade treaty. We look forward to participating in the upcoming process in that regard with a view to achieving a legally binding treaty regulating the trade in such weapons as well as their munitions.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): There are a number of speakers remaining on my list for this meeting. In view of the lateness of the hour, I intend, with the concurrence of members of the Council, to suspend the meeting until 3 p.m.

The meeting was suspended at 12.50 p.m.